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Reagan Attacks 'Totalitarian' Nicaragua in Push for Rebel Aid

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President Reagan, stepping up pressure on Congress for \$21 million in military aid to rebels fighting Nicaragua's Sandinista government, said yesterday that Nicaragua's people "are trapped in a totalitarian dungeon" worse than the dictatorship of the late Anastasio Somoza.

Reagan's charges, timed to mark today's fifth anniversary of the Sandinistas' ouster of Somoza were part of a three-pronged administration attack that included release of a new "background paper" on Nicaragua slightly toughened from a June draft.

The administration also complained to the Organization of American States that Nicaragua has failed to keep the promises of its revolution.

"The Sandinista revolution is a revolution betrayed, a revolution that has left in its wake a trail of broken promises, broken

hearts and broken dreams," Reagan told a White House "outreach" group on Central America. "Tragically, there is less personal freedom, far more repression in Nicaragua today than there was five years ago."

U.S. Ambassador J. William Middendorf reminded the OAS it had called for Somoza's replacement in 1979 and that the Sandinistas had promised the OAS in a cable to promote civil, political and human rights and to hold free elections.

"It is a shame that the people of Nicaragua, so hopeful in 1979 that their situation would improve, have seen their revolution betrayed by a group of leaders who have aligned themselves with international communism," Middendorf told an OAS meeting.

Congress has blocked Reagan's request for military aid to the "contras" fighting the Sandinistas. Reagan has called them "freedom fighters" and vowed to press for the money, but White House officials said a

strategy for persuading Congress to approve it has not been worked out.

Reagan said yesterday that the Sandinista "dictatorship" is "made all the more insulting, all the more dangerous by the unwanted presence of thousands of Cuban, Soviet bloc and radical Arab helpers."

His short speech was made to a meeting organized by Faith Ryan Whittlesey, his public liaison director, who has been trying for more than a year to build public support for administration policies in Central America.

The president said he had read about a September conference to be held in Cleveland to protest "military intervention" in Central America. "Well, if 55 trainers in a country like El Salvador is military intervention, I think they're exaggerating a little bit," he said.

Reagan made no mention of the large U.S. military exercises that have been all

but continuous elsewhere in the region for the past year.

He also called for the Nicaraguan government to open its scheduled elections to the OAS and repeated his recent criticism of Sandinista repression of church leaders.

In its new background paper on Nicaragua, titled "Nicaragua's Military Buildup and Support for Central American Subversion," the administration reasserted its position that "there has been a steady flow of ammunition, explosives, medicines and clothing" from Nicaragua to the leftist guerrillas in neighboring El Salvador.

A June draft of the paper, distributed to Congress, had called the flow of supplies "sporadic," adding that "the arms needs of the guerrilla units have been basically satisfied, except for replacements and arms for newly created guerrilla units." Critics of the administration policy had hailed that statement as more realistic than Reagan's ear-

lier assertions of massive and continuing arms aid.

The new paper, however, returned to the earlier view. It also deleted a statement in the draft quoting Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-Del.) as "convinced" about Nicaragua's role in arms supply. A staff member said Biden had expressed concern to the State Department that the statement represented an "out of context quotation" of his remarks.

The 52-page report included 15 pages of previously unpublished maps and pictures of equipment and Nicaraguan military installations purporting to document Nicaragua's alleged military threat to its neighbors.

Echoing recent administration attacks on international terrorism, the report said there is "an international subversive network that operates with Managua as its nerve center." But it offered no concrete evidence or new intelligence findings to support the charge.